

We must challenge, Mr. Speaker, the media, political, labor, and other leaders to transform the national discussion and debate from mere racial justice for minorities to greater racial justice for minorities in the context of greater economic justice for all Americans.

Dr. King's dream was poetic and it was symbolic. Dr. King's substance was a nonviolent, activist, economic strategy to combat racism and bring about racial reconciliation. That is why he moved from just talking about racial justice to talking about racial reconciliation in the context of an economic justice movement.

In 1968 when he was killed, he was not fighting for civil rights. That bill was passed in 1964, and he was not sleeping for 4 years. What was he doing in 1968? He was leading a poor people's campaign that paralleled the national Presidential campaign because he wanted the Nation's priorities to reflect raising boats that were stuck at the bottom.

In a nation with the economic ability and the technological capability of providing every American with a decent life, it is an outrage and it is a scandal that there should be such social misery in our country.

What do we say to the American poor and to the victims of racism and sexism and classism in America? Do we tell them, Mr. Speaker, that you are better off than the Russian poor? You are better off than the Bosnian poor? You are better off than the Asian poor, the African poor, the Latin poor? This, Mr. Speaker, has got to be close to cruel and insensitive and immoral.

No, we must tell them that such injustice is intolerable. That no American should be institutionally and systematically maimed in body and in spirit when our country has the means of doing better. The standard is not a comparison of how much worse things could be, but how much better things should be if we had only the political leadership and the development of the political will to change.

We are a nation, Mr. Speaker, of enormous national wealth that is tragically suffering from an anemia of national will to do what we know is just. It is time to end race entertainment, and it is time to start down the sure path of economic and racial justice.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 43 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1700

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY) at 5 p.m.

#### COMMEMORATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, let me first thank our chairwoman, Congressman MAXINE WATERS, the gentlewoman from California, for her leadership and tenacity in moving forthwith on critical issues of importance, not only to African-Americans, but to all Americans, and to our revered and preeminent leader, the gentleman from Ohio, Congressman LOUIS STOKES, for the guidance in advising those of us who have come recently to this House to do the people's business. My thanks to both of my colleagues for allowing me these moments to reflect.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud African American to acknowledge this month as African American History Month and to recognize the vast contributions made by distinguished citizens of this Nation who are of African descent.

As we hold our forbearers to high esteem for their courage, perseverance, morality and faith, we salute them for their relentless efforts in fighting to remove the legal and political disabilities that were imposed upon us.

While I represent California's 37th Congressional District with pride, my birth State is Alabama, and I am reminded of the first African American from Alabama who was elected to the 42d Congress and who advocated even then the importance of education, Benjamin Sterling Turner.

Education has been the cornerstone in the African American community. My father, Rev. Shelley Millender, Sr., knew the importance of education. He and my mother, Mrs. Evelena Deutsche Millender advocated a quality education and gave us a value system that is part and parcel of the true spirit of African American families. We recognize that a good education is the key to success and should open the door of opportunity.

I am further reminded of my father's teachings when he said, never subordinate to race-bashing; respect yourself and others, even though you have differences of opinion, but hold firm to your convictions.

Let us not forget one who had strong convictions in the name of Wiley Branton, now deceased, but who was a great American and a great leader in the early civil rights movements. He was born and reared in Pine Bluff, AR, became a lawyer, and began practicing law in his hometown. His earliest achievements, however, was of national interest, as he represented the Little Rock Nine in 1958. He later became the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, being appointed by the President, then Lyndon Johnson. He served as the dean of Howard University School of Law until his death. Convictions like that and convictions like

Branton is but one of the various teachings of commitment and dedication that the African American family instills in their children.

As I listened very closely to the President's State of the Union Address, as he spoke of education as a No. 1 priority, building strong families and communities, and humanitarian efforts in the assistance of the underprivileged through volunteerism, I stand tonight to lift up some of my constituents who are role models and great citizens that the President talked about. Their names will never be in lights nor on billboards, but they are the unsung heroes of my community. They helped in the education of our children, they built strong families and engaging communities, and they taught us to have a strong value system. Let me share with you these outstanding African American individuals.

Theresa LaVerne Harris who passed away in November 1996 was a dedicated educator. Throughout her life Theresa LaVerne touched all of us who had the pleasure of knowing her with her humor, her strength and, perhaps most importantly, her dignity. But she never forgot that education was the key, and therefore she became an educator and an administrator with the Los Angeles Unified School District. She spent her early youth in Louisiana and Mississippi until her family moved to California in 1943. She attended the Los Angeles unified schools and graduated from John Francis Polytechnic High School with honors. But it was during her college days at UCLA that she decided to become this educator.

Theresa LaVerne began a long distinguished life educating the young kids from the inner city. She excelled in her career as an educator. Though she raised three outstanding children, she was a loving and supportive wife, and in spite of all of this, she went on to earn a master's degree in personnel administration from Pepperdine University.

But both as an educator and an administrator within a public school system, Theresa LaVerne worked hard to ensure that students under her charge had the very best of education available to them. While she was deservedly proud of her mark as a personal and academic woman of achievements, she was more interested in using her talents and her strength to help children to become better educated and to ensure their mark in the future in mainstreaming them into the world of work.

Those of us who worked around her saw that she was a very strong disciplinarian in her efforts to make sure that education stayed the primary responsibility of those teachers and administrators who worked under her watch.

Mr. Speaker, I worked with Theresa LaVerne Harris and had the privilege of knowing her and her family for decades. She was a devoted wife, a wonderful and nurturing mother, a role model not only for our children, but for all of